LEONORA.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

LEONORA.

FROM THE

GERMAN

OF

GOTTFRIED AUGUSTUS BÜRGHER.

WITH A PREFACE

BY W. R. SPENCER, ESQ.

TO WHICH ARE ANNEXED,

TWO OTHER TRANSLATIONS

BY J. T. STANLEY, ESQ. F. R. S.

AND

HENRY JAMES PYE, ESQ.

POET LAUREAT.

WITH A VERSION AFTER THE MANNER OF THE

OLD ENGLISH BALLAD.

AND THE

ORIGINAL GERMAN.

DUBLIN:

PRINTED FOR JOHN ARCHER.

1799.

BRITISH MUSEUM

PREFACE.

THE works of Mr. Burgher, the Author of this and many other Poems of the ballad kind, are universally esteemed, wherever the German Language prevails as a national idiom, or is cultivated as a branch of education. Simplicity is the characteristic of his compositions; and of all literary beauties, simplicity muſt be the most generally attractive. It is no common merit to excel in a ſtile which all understand, many admire, and but few can attain. To this merit Mr. Burgher has an undoubted claim; a claim our countrymen would be the first to

allow, could they enjoy his expressions in their original purity, or his ideas in a faithful translation. No writer perhaps has ever obtained a more decided popularity. To this his subjects and his language equally contribute; for the former he has mostly chosen local traditions, or legendary anecdotes; and in the latter he is generally elegant, often sublime, and never unintelligible. Such qualifications ensure him the suffrage of every class of readers. The scholar and the moralist cannot refuse praise where they have found entertainment, without disgust to their taste, or danger to their principles; and the mechanic peruses with delight, sentiments suited to his feelings, imagery familiar to his mind, and precepts adapted to his practice.

One of the most powerful causes of Mr. Burgher's literary popularity is the deep tinge

of superstition that shades almost all his compositions. Supernatural incidents are the darling subjects of his countrymen. Their minds vigorously conceive, and their language nobly expresses, the terrible and majestic: and it must be allowed, that in this species of writing they would force from our nation the palm of excellence, were it not secured by the impregnable towers of Otranto. Of all their productions of this kind, Leonora is perhaps the most perfect. The story in a narrow compass unites tragic event, poetical surprise, and epic regularity. The admonitions of the Mother are just, although ill timed. The dispair of the Daughter at once natural, and criminal; her punishment dreadful, but equitable. Few objections can be made to a subject, new, simple, and striking; and none to a moral, which cannot be too frequently or too awfully enforced.

The Translator must apologise to those who are "docti sermones utriusqu linguæ," for some deviations from the original text. Mr. Burgher has repeatedly used words merely for sound, as 'trap, trap, trap,' for the trotting of an horse; and 'cling, cling, cling,' for the ringing of a door bell. These echos to the sense, which are strictly "vox et preterea nihil," custom may reconcile to a German taste; but, literally adopted in an English version, they would appear more ridiculous than descriptive. In general it is hoped, that, although many beauties may have been obscured, no essential meaning has been omitted or adulterated.

Between the completion of this Poem and its publication, which has been unavoidably delayed, an elegant version of the same ballad has been published by Mr. Pye. Had the

Author, of this translation foreseen the intentions of the Laureat, he would not probably have risked a contest with such a distinguished competitor; but, as he had long entered the field before Mr. Pye appeared as his adversary, he will not now shrink from a combat where doubtful victory must ensure applause, and even complete failure allow the consolation of "Æneæ magni dextra cadit."

W. R. SPENCER.

LEONORA.

FROM THE GERMAN.

OF

G. A. BÜRGHER.

BY W. R. SPENCER, ESQ.

FROM visions of disastrous love
LEONORA starts at dawn of day;
"How long, my WILHELM, wilt thou rove?
Does death, or falsehood cause thy stay?"
Since he with godlike FREDERICK's pow'rs
At PRAGUE had foremost dar'd the foe,
No tidings cheer'd her lonely hours,
No rumour told his weal or woe.

Empress, and King, alike fitigued,
Now bade the storm of battle cease;
Their arms relenting friendship leagued,
And heal'd the bleeding world with peace.
They sing, they shout, their cymbals clang,
The green wreaths wave, they come, they come;
Each war-worn Hero comes to hang
With trophies his long wept for home.

While from each bastion, tower, and shed,
Their country's general blessing showers;
Love twines for every laurel'd head,
His garland of domestic flowers.
How welcome husbands, sons, return'd!
What tears, what kisses greet the brave!
Alone poor LEONORA mourn'd,
Nor tear, nor kiss, nor welcome gave.

From rank to rank, from name to name,
The fond inquirer trembling flew;
But none by person or by fame,
Aught of her gallant WILHELM knew.

When all the joyous bands were gone,
Aghast she tore her raven hair;
On the cold earth she cast her down,
Convuls'd with frenzy and despair.

In haste th' affrighted mother flew,
And round her clasp'd her aged arms:
"Oh, God! her griefs with mercy view,
"Oh, calm her constant heart's alarms!"
"Oh, mother! past is past; 'tis o'er;
"Nor joy, nor world, nor hope I see;
"Thy God my anguish hears no more,
"Alas, alas! Oh, woe is me!"

"Oh, hear, great God! with pity hear!
"My child, thy prayer to Heaven address;
"God does all well; 'tis ours to bear;
"God gives, but God relieves distress."
"All trust in Heaven is weak and frail;
"God ill, not well, by me has done;
"I pray'd, while prayers could yet avail;
"Now prayers are vain, for WILHELM's gone."

" Oh, ever in affliction's hour
" The father hears his children's cry;
" His blessed Sacraments shall pour
" True comfort o'er thy misery."
" Oh, mother, pangs like mine that burn,
" What Sacrament can e'er allay?
" What Sacrament can bid return
" Life's spirit to the mouldering clay?"

" But if, my child, in distant lands,
" Unmindful of his plighted vows,
" Thy false one courts another's bands,
" Fresh kisses, and a newer spouse,
" Why let the perjured rover go;
" No blessings shall his new love bring,
" And when death lays his body low,
" Thy wrongs his guilty soul shall sting."

" My pangs no cure nor comfort crave;
" Joy, hope, and life, alike I scorn;
" My hope is death, my joy the grave,
" Curs'd be the day that saw me born!

" Sink, sink, detested vital flame,
" Sink in the starless night of death :
" Not God's, but WILHELM's, darling name
" Shall faulter from my parting breath !"

" Judge not, great God ! this erring child,
" No guilt her bosom dwells within ;
" Her thoughts are craz'd, her words are wild ;
" Arm not for her the death of sin !
" Oh, child ! forget thy mortal love,
" Think of God's bliss and mercies sweet ;
" So shall thy soul, in realms above,
" A bright eternal bridegroom meet."

" Oh, mother ! what is God's sweet bliss ?
" Oh, mother, mother ! what is hell ?
" With WILHELM there is only bliss,
" And without WILHELM only hell !
" O'er this tornheart, o'er these sad eyes,
" Let the still grave's long midnight reign ;
" Unless my love that bliss supplies,
" Nor earth, nor heaven can bliss contain."

Thus did the demons of despair
Her wildered sense to madness strain,
Thus did her impious clamours dare
Eternal wisdom to arraign.
She beat her breast, her hands she wrung,
Till westward sunk the car of light,
And countless stars in air were hung
To gem the matron weeds of night.

Hark! with high tread, and prancings proud,
A war horse shakes the rattling gate:
Clattering his clanking armour loud,
Alights a horseman at the grate:
And, hark! the door bell gently rings,
What sounds are those we faintly hear?
The night breeze in low murmur brings
These words to LEONORA's ear.

"Holla, holla! my life, my love!
"Does LEONORA watch or sleep?
"Still does her heart my vows approve?
"Does LEONORA smile or weep?"

" O WILHELM, thou! these eyes for thee
" Fever'd with tearful vigils burn;
" Aye fear, and woe, have dwelt with me,
" Oh! why so late thy wish'd return?"

" At dead of night alone we ride,
" From Prague's far distant field I come;
" 'Twas late ere I could 'gin bestride
" This coal black barb, to bear thee home."
" Oh, rest thee first, my WILHELM, here!
" Bleak roars the blast through vale and grove;
" Oh come, thy war-worn limbs to cheer
" On the soft couch of joy and love!"

" Let the bleak blast, my child, roar on,
" Let it roar on; we dare not stay:
" My fierce steed maddens to be gone,
" My spurs are set; away, away.
" Mount by thy true love's guardian side;
" We should ere this full far have sped;
" Five hundred destined miles we ride
" This night, to reach our nuptial bed."

" Our nuptial bed, this night so dark,
" So late, five hundred miles to roam?
" Yet sounds the bell, which struck, to mark
" That in one hour would midnight come."
" See there, see here, the moon shines clear,
" We and the dead ride fast away;
" I gage, though long our way, and drear,
" We reach our nuptial bed to day."

" Say where the bed, and bridal hall?
" What guests our blissful union greet?
" Low lies the bed, still, cold and small;
" Six dark boards, and one milk white sheet."
" Haſt room for me?" " Room, room enow:
" Come mount; strang hands our feast prepare;
" To grace the solemn rite, e'en now
" No common bridesmen wait us there."

Loose was her zone, her breast unveil'd,
All wild her shadowy tresses hung;
O'er fear confiding love prevail'd,
As lightly on the barb she sprung.

Like wind the bounding courser flies,
Earth shakes his thundering hoofs beneath;
Dust, stones, and sparks, in whirlwind rise,
And horse and horseman pant for breath.

How swift, how swift from left and right
The racing fields and hills recede;
Bourns, bridges, rocks, that cross their flight,
In thunders echo to their speed.
"Fear'st thou, my love? the moon shines clear;
Hurrah! how swiftly speed the dead!
"The dead does LEONORA fear?"
"Ah, no; but talk not of the dead."

What accents slow, of wail and woe,
Have made yon shrieking raven soar?
The death bell beats! the dirge repeats,
"This dust to parent dust restore."
Blackening the night, a funeral train
On a cold bier a coffin brings;
Their slow pace measur'd to a strain
Sad as the saddest night-bird sings.

" This dust to dust restore, what time
" The midnight dews o'er graves are shed;
" Meanwile of brides the flower and prime
" I carry to our nuptial bed.
" Sexton, thy sable minstrels bring!
" Come, priest, the eternal bonds to bless!
" All in deep groans our spousals sing,
" Ere we the genial pillow press."

The bier, the coffin, disappear'd,
The dirge in distant echoes died,
Quick sounds of viewless steps are heard
Hurrying the coal-black barb beside.
Like wind the bounding courser flies,
Earth shakes his thundering hoofs beneath;
Dust, stones, and sparks in whirlwind rise,
And horse and horseman pant for breath.

Mountains and trees, on left and right,
Swam backward from their aching view;
With speed that mock'd the labouring sight
Towns, villages, and castles flew.

" Fear'st thou, my love? the moon shines clear;
" Hurrah! how swiftly speed the dead!
" The dead does LEONORA fear?"
" Oh leave, oh leave in peace the dead!"

See, where fresh blood-gouts mat the green,
Yon wheel its reeking points advance;
There, by the moon's wanlight half seen,
Grim ghosts of tombless murderer's dance.
" Come, spectres of the guilty dead,
" With us your goblin morris ply,
" Come all in festive dance to tread,
" Ere on the bridal couch we lie."

Forward th' obedient phantoms push,
Their trackless footsteps rustle near,
In sound like Autumn winds that rush
Through withering oak or beech-wood sere.
With lightning's force the courser flies,
Earth shakes his thund'ring hoofs beneath,
Dust, stones, and sparks, in whirlwind rise,
And horse, and horseman pant for breath.

Swift roll the moonlight scenes away,
Hills chasing hills successive fly;
E'en stars that pave th' eternal way,
Seem shooting to a backward sky.
" Feer'st thou, my love? the moon shines clear;
" Hurrah! how swiftly speed the dead!
" The dead does LEONORA fear?"
" Oh God! oh leave, oh leave the dead!"

" Barb! barb! methinks the cock's shrill horn
" Warns that our sand is nearly run:
" Barb! barb! I scent the gales of morn,
" Haste, that our course be timely done.
" Our course is done! our sand is run!
" The nuptial bed the bride attends;
" This night the dead have swiftly sped;
" Here, here, our midnight travel ends!"

Full at a portal's massy gate
The plunging steed impetuous dash'd:
At the dread shock, wall, bars, and gate,
Hurl'd down with headlong ruin crash'd.

Thin, sheeted phantoms gibbering glide
O'er paths, with bones and fresh skulls strewn,
Charnels and tombs on every side
Gleam dimly to the blood red morn.

Lo, while the night's dread glooms increase,
All chang'd the wond'rous horseman stood,
His crumbling flesh fell piece by piece,
Like ashes from consuming wood.
Shrunk to a skull his pale head glares,
High ridg'd his eyeless sockets stand,
All bone his length'ning form appears;
A dart gleams deadly from his hand.

The fiend horse snorts; blue fiery flakes
Collected roll his nostrils round;
High rear'd, his bristling mane he shakes,
And sinks beneath the rending ground,
Demons the thundering clouds bestride,
Ghosts yell the yawning tombs beneath;
LEONORA's heart, its life-blood dried,
Hangs quiv'ring on the dart of death.

Throng'd in the moon's eclipsing shade,
Of fiends and shapes a spectre crowd
Dance featly round th' expiring maid,
And howl this awful lesson loud:
" Learn patience, though thy heart should break,
" Nor seek God's mandates to controul!
" Now this cold earth thy dust shall take,
" And heav'n relenting take thy soul!"

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LEONORA.

A TALE,

TRANSLATED AND ALTERED FROM THE

GERMAN

OF

GOTTFRIED AUGUSTUS BÜRGER.

BY J. T. STANLEY, ESQ. F. R. S. &c.

" Poetry hath Bubbles, as the water has:
" And these are of them."—

Does not th' idea of a God include
The notion of beneficent and good;
Of one to mercy, not revenge inclin'd,
Able and willing to relieve mankind?

Dublin:

PRINTED FOR JOHN ARCHER.

1799.

BRITISH MUSEUM

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Letter from the Translator to the *English Publisher* states his reasons for deviating from the story originally related by Burger.

DEAR SIR,

" I HAVE sent you, ac-
" cording to my promise, a copy of the
" translation of Burger's Leonora. Transla-
" tion, indeed, I ought scarcely to call it;
" for I have so altered and added to the ori-
" ginal, that the story in its English dress,
" has acquired a character, altogether new
" and peculiarly its own.

" Since the first publication of this poem, " I have often doubted whether it was not " calculated (as far as its effects could extend) " to injure the cause of Religion and Morality, " by exhibiting a representation of supernatu- " ral interference, inconsistent with our ideas " of a just and benevolent Deity.

" It is of more importance than is generally " believed, both to human happiness and vir- " tue, that the Being we adore should be con- " sidered as amiable and impartial, and not as " either capricious or morose. Obedience to " his will should surely be procured from " men (if possible) by an appeal, rather to " their affections, than to their fears; but " what opinion of either the kindness, or " justice of Providence, can be formed from " the description of a young girl exposed to " the most cruel of all punishments, aban- " doned to the malignity of every fiend of

" Hell let loose for her destruction, only be-
" cause in the first paroxysms of despair and
" agony, for the supposed loss of a lover,
" thinking God indifferent about her fate, ſhe
" refused all comfort, and wished for death.

" Such reflections have tempted me to make
" the alterations I have alluded to. I am,
" however, doubtful whether they will be ap-
" proved of by the public. Those who think
" the merit of the Poem consists in its power
" of exciting terror, and who love to retain
" the impression of such sentiments when once
" excited, will probably condemn every devia-
" tion from the original, as prejudicial to its
" interests; but, on the other hand, many
" may prefer it, as it now appears, who
" think that the first object of all writ-
" ing, particularly of all poetry, as bear-
" ing the character of more studied compo-
" sition, should be to teach men clear ideas

" of justice and injustice, vice and virtue.—
" They will be pleased to find the Almighty
" no longer held out to their contemplation as
" an irritable and vindictive ruler, ever watch-
" ful for offence, and prepared to punish; but
" on the contrary, the friend and affectionate
" parent, having but one interest with his crea-
" tures, happy in their happiness, and asso-
" ciated to their nature in the captivating forms
" of sympathy and love.

" I am, dear Sir, truly your's,

" *London, April* 15, 1796." " I. T. S."

LEONORA.

"AH, William! art thou false or dead?"
Cried Leonora from her bed.
"I dreamt thou'dst ne'er return."
William had fought in Frederick's host
At Prague, but what his fate—if lost
Or safe, she could not learn.

Hungaria's Queen, and Prussia's King,
Wearied, at length, with bickering,
Resolv'd to end the strife;
And homewards, then, their separate routs
The armies took, with songs and shouts,
With cymbals, drum, and fife.

As deck'd with boughs they march'd along,
From ev'ry door, the old and young
Rush'd forth the troops to greet.
" Thank God," each child and parent cry'd,
And " welcome, welcome," many a bride,
As friends long parted meet.

They joy'd, poor Leonora griev'd:
No kiss she gave, no kiss receiv'd;
Of William none could tell;
She wrung her hands, and tore her hair;
Till left alone, in deep despair,
Bereft of sense she fell.

Swift to her aid, her mother came,
" Ah! say," ſhe cried, " in mercy's name,
" What means this frantic grief?"
" Mother, 'tis past—all hopes are fled,
" God hath no mercy, William's dead,
" My woe is past relief."

" Pardon, O pardon, Lord above!
" My child, with pray'rs invoke his love,
" The Almighty never errs;"
" O, mother! mother! idle prate,
" Can he be anxious for my fate,
" Who never heard my prayers?"

" Be patient, child, in God believe,
" The good he can, and will relieve,
" To trust his power endeavour."
" O, mother! mother! all is vain,
" What trust can bring to life again?
" The past, is past, for ever.

" Who knows, but that he yet survives;
" Perchance, far off from hence he lives,
" And thinks no more of you.
" Forget, forget, the faithless youth,
" Away with grief, your sorrow soothe,
" Since William proves untrue."

" Mother, all hope has fled my mind,
" The past, is past, our God's unkind;
" Why did he give me breath?
" Oh! that this hated loathsome light
" Would fade for ever from my sight,
" Come, death, come, welcome death!"

" Indulgent Father, spare my child,
" Her agony hath made her wild,
" She knows not what she does.
" Daughter, forget thy earthly love,
" Look up to him who reigns above,
" Where joys succeed to woes."

" Mother, what now are joys to me?
" With William, Hell a Heaven could be,
" Without him, Heaven a Hell.
" Fade, fade away, thou hated light,
" Death, bear me hence to endless night,
" With love all hope farewell."

Thus rashly, Leonora strove
To doubt the truth of heavenly love.
She wept, and beat her breast;
She pray'd for death, until the moon
With all the stars in silence shone,
And sooth'd the world to rest.

When, hark! without, what sudden sound!
She hears a trampling o'er the ground,
Some horseman must be near!
He stops, he rings. Hark! as the noise
Dies soft away, a well-known voice
Thus greets her list'ning ear.

" Wake, Leonora;—dost thou sleep,
" Or thoughtless laugh, or constant weep,
" Is William welcome home?"
" Dear William, you!—return'd, and well!
" I've wak'd and wept—but why, ah! tell,
" So late—at night you come?"

" At midnight only dare we roam,
" For thee from Prague, though late, I come."
" For me!—stay here and rest;
" The wild winds whistle o'er the waste,
" Ah, dearest William! why such haste?
" First warm thee in my breast."

" Let the winds whistle o'er the waste,
" My duty bids me be in haste;
" Quick, mount upon my steed:
" Let the winds whistle far and wide,
" Ere morn, two hundred leagues we'll ride,
" To reach our marriage bed."

" What, William! for a bridal room,
" Travel to night so far from home?
" Leonora, 'tis decreed.
" Look round thee, love, the moon ſhines clear,
" The dead ride swiftly; never fear,
" We'll reach our marriage bed."

" Ah, William! whither would'st thou speed,
" What! where! this distant marriage bed?"
" Leonora, no delay.
" 'Tis far from hence; still—cold—and small:
" Six planks, no more, compose it all;
" Our guests await, away!"

She lightly on the courser sprung,
And her white arms round William flung,
Like to a lily wreath.
In swiftest gallop off they go,
The stones and sparks around they throw,
And pant the way for breath.

The objects fly on every side,
The bridges thunder as they ride;
" Art thou my love afraid?
" Death swiftly rides, the moon shines clear,
" The dead doth Leonora fear?"
" Ah, no!—why name the dead?"

Hark! as their rapid course they urge,
A passing bell, and solemn dirge;
Hoarse ravens join the strain.
They see a coffin on a bier,
A priest and mourners too appear,
Slow moving o'er the plain.

And sad was heard the funeral lay;
" What the Lord gives, he takes away;
" Life's but a fleeting shade.
" A tale that's told,—a flower that falls;
" Death, when the least expected, calls,
" And bears us to his bed."

" Forbear;"—imperious William cry'd,
" I carry home, a beauteous bride,
" Come, to our marriage feast;
" Mourners, away, we want your song;
" And as we swiftly haste along,
" Give us your blessing, priest.

" Sing on, that life is like a shade,
" A tale that's told, or flowers which fade;
" Such strains will yield delight.
" And, when we to our chamber go,
" Bury your dead, with wail and woe;
" The service suits the night."

While William speaks, they silent stand,
Then run obedient to command.
But, on with furious bound,
The foaming courser forward flew,
Fire and stones his heels pursue,
Like whirlwinds dash'd around.

On right and left, on left and right,
Trees, hills, and towns flew past their sight,
As on they breathless prest;
" With the bright moon, like death we speed,
" Doth Leonora fear the dead?"
" Ah! leave the dead at rest."

Behold, where in the moon's pale beam,
As wheels and gibbets faintly gleam,
Join'd hand in hand, a crowd
Of imps and spectres hover nigh,
Or round a wasted wretch they fly,
When William calls aloud:

"Hither, ye airy rabble, come,
"And follow till I reach my home;
"We want a marriage dance."
As when the leaves on wither'd trees,
Are rustled by an eddying breeze,
The muttering sprites advance.

But, soon with hurried steps, the crew
Rush'd prattling on, for William flew,
Clasp'd by the frighted fair:
Swifter than shafts, or than the wind,
While struck from earth, fire flash'd behind,
Like lightnings through the air.

Not only flew the landscape by,
The clouds and stars appear'd to fly.
" Thus over hills and heath
" We ride like death; say, lovely maid,
" By moon-light dost thou fear the dead?"
" Ah! speak no more of death."

" The cock hath crow'd.—Away! away!
" The sand ebbs out: I scent the day.
" On! on! away from here!
" Soon must our destin'd course be run,
" The dead ride swift,—hurrah! 'tis done,
" The marriage bed is near."

High grated iron doors, in vain
Barr'd their way.—With loosened rein
Whil'st William urg'd the steed,
He struck the bolts;—they open flew,
A church yard drear appear'd in view;
Their path was o'er the dead.

As now, half veil'd by clouds, the moon
With feebler ray, o'er objects shone,
Where tomb-stones faint appear,
A grave new dug arrests the pair,
Cry'd, William, and embrac'd the fair,
" Our marriage bed is here."

Scarce had he spoke, when, dire to tell,
His flesh like touchwood from him fell,
His eyes forsook his head.
A skull, and naked bones alone,
Supply the place of William gone,
'Twas Death that clasp'd the maid.

Wild, snorting fire, the courser rear'd,
As wrapp'd in smoke he disappear'd,
Poor Leonora fell;
The hideous spectres hover round,
Deep groans ſhe hears from under ground,
And fiends ascend from hell.

They dance, and cry, in dreadful howl,
" She asks no mercy for her soul ;
" Her earthly course is done.
" When mortals, rash and impious ! dare
" Contend with God, and court despair,
" We claim them as our own."

" Yet," thus was heard, in milder strains,
" Call on the Lord, while life remains,
" Unite your heart to his ;
" When Man repents and is resign'd,
" God loves to soothe his suff'ring mind,
" And grant him future bliss."

" We claim as our's, who impious dare
" Contend with God, and court despair ;"
Again the spectres cry'd.
" Fate threats in vain, when man's resign'd,
" God loves to soothe the suffring mind,"
The gentler voice reply'd.

Leonora, e'er her sense was gone,
Thus faint exclaim'd,—" thy Will be done,
" Lord, let thy anger cease."
Soft on the wind was borne the pray'r;
The spectres vanish'd into air,
And all was hush'd in peace.

Now redd'ning tints the skies adorn,
And streaks of gold, proclaim the morn:
The night is chas'd away.
The sun ascends, new warmth he gives,
New hope, new joy; all nature lives,
And hails the glorious day.

No more are dreadful phantoms near;
Love, and his smiling train, appear;
They cull each sweetest flow'r,
To scatter o'er the path of youth,
To deck the bridal bed, when Truth
And Beauty own their pow'r.

Ah,—could your pow'r avert the blast
Which threatens Bliss!—could passion last!
Ye dear enchanters tell;
What purer joy could Heaven bestow,
Than when with shar'd affection's glow,
Our panting bosoms swell?

Sweet spirits! wave the airy wand,
Two faithful hearts your care demand;
Lo! bounding o'er the plain,
Led by your charm, a youth returns;
With hope, his breast impatient burns;
Hope is not always vain.

"Wake, Leonora!—wake to Love!
"For thee, his choicest wreath he wove;"
Death vainly aim'd his Dart.
The past was all a dream; she woke—
He lives;—'twas William's self who spoke,
And clasp'd her to his Heart.

FINIS.

10 JA 67

LENORE,

A

TALE:

FROM THE GERMAN OF

GOTTFRIED AUGUSTUS BÜRGER.

BY

HENRY JAMES PYE.

POET LAUREAT.

ΟΙ ΔΕ, ΜΗ ΤΟ ΦΟΒΕΡΟΝ, ΑΛΛΑ ΤΟ ΤΕΡΑΤΩΔΕΣ ΜΟΝΟΝ
ΠΑΡΑΣΚΕΥΑΖΟΝΤΕΣ, ΟΥΔΕΝ ΤΡΑΓΩΔΙΑΙ ΚΟΙΝΩΝΟΥΣΙ.

ARISTOT. POET.

Dublin:

PRINTED FOR JOHN ARCHER.

1799.

BRITISH MUSEUM

ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS attempt would not have appeared, to anticipate a promised translation of the same Tale, by the pen of a young poet of illustrious birth, had there not been one already published. Between that publication, and this, there can be no competition, as that is a free paraphraſe, this is a translation line by line, and as near the original, as the reſtraint of verſification, and the idiom, and genius, of the different languages would admit. A closer verſion, would, in ſome places, have been ridiculous, and in others, profane.*

The motto prefixed, deviates from the usual partiality of translators. This little poem, from the ſingularity of the incidents, and the wild horror of the images, is certainly an object of curioſity, but is by no means held up as a pattern for imitation.

* W. R. Spencer, Esq.

To avoid confusion, the words of Lenóre *are distinguished by one inverted comma, those of her mother, and the spectre, by two. The English reader must be told that the final* e *is pronounced in* Lenóre.

LENORE,

A

TALE.

LENÓRE wakes from dreams of dread
At the rosy dawn of day,
'Art thou false, or art thou dead?
'WILLIAM wherefore this delay?'
Join'd with FREDERICK's host he sought
On PRAGA's bloody field, the foe,
Since no tidings had been brought
Of his weal, or of his woe.

Tir'd of war, the royal foes
Bid the storm of battle cease,
And in mutual compact close
Terms of amity, and peace;

Either host with jocund strain,
Drum, and cymbals chearing sound,
Seek their peaceful homes again,
All with verdant garlands crown'd.

Young and old, on every side
Croud the way, their friends to meet,
Many a mother, many a bride,
Sons, and husbands, fondly greet.
Pale and chearless mid the rest
Ah! the sad LENORE see!
None to clasp thee to his breast,
Not a glowing kiss for thee.

Now amid the warlike train
Running swift, with tearful eye,
All she asks, but all in vain.—
See the lingering rear pass by!—
Now she rends with frantic hand
Tresses of her raven hair,
Falling breathless on the sand,
Agonizing in despair.

Lo! with grief her mother wild.—
" Pitying heaven! look down with grace.—
" O my child! my dearest child!"
And clasps her in a fond embrace.
' Ah my mother all is o'er;
' Desart now the world will prove.—
' Heaven no mercy has in store.
' Ah my lost, my slaughter'd love!'

" Aid her Heaven! her grief appease.—
" Breathe my child a fervent prayer.
" Ever just are Heaven's decrees,
" Heaven is ever prompt to spare."
' Prayers alas! are useless all,
' Heaven to me no mercy shews,
' Vainly I for aid should call,
' Unregarded are my woes.'

" Aid LORD! O aid! His parent sight
" Watchful guards each duteous child;
" Soon shall his high-honor'd rite
" Soothe to peace thy sorrows wild."—

‘ Ah! the pangs my heart that rive
‘ Holy rites would soothe in vain;
‘ Can they bid the dead revive?—
‘ Bid my WILLIAM breathe again?”

“ Hear my child! in foreign lands
“ Far away his troth he plights,
“ Binds his faith by newer bands,
“ Thee for newer loves he slights.—
“ Unregarded let him rove,
“ Short his visions of delight,
“ Perjuries of treacherous love
“ Heaven with vengeance will requite.”

‘ Mother, time returns no more;
‘ I am wretched, lost, forlorn;
‘ Every hope but death is o’er,
‘ Woe the hour that I was born!
‘ Wrap me deep in night, and shade,
‘ Far the light of life remove,
‘ Heaven’s mercy is no more display’d,
‘ O my Love, my murder’d love!’

" God of Mercy! Hear! O hear!
" Frantic sorrow makes her wild;
" Judge not in thy wrath severe,
" Spare, O spare thy tortur'd child.
" O my child, forget thy woe,
" Lift to heaven thy sorrowing eye
" Endless blessings there to know,
" Bridal joys that never die."

' Mother, what is endless bliss?
' Endless pain, what, Mother?—Tell
' All my Heaven was William's kiss,
' William's loss is all my hell.
' Far the light of life remove,
' Night and horror shroud my head.
' Can I live to mourn my love?
' Can I joy when William's dead?'

Thus the frenzy of despair
Thro' her swelling veins was driven,
Thus her madd'ning accents dare
War against the will of heaven;

Frantic thro' the live-long day
Her breast she beat, her hands she wrung,
Till SOL withdrew his golden ray,
And heaven's high arch with stars was hung.

Thro' the stillness of the night
Hark!—a horse—he this way bends.—
Now she hears the rider 'light,
Now his foot the step ascends.
Hark?—the tinkling gate bell rung
Now her listening senses hear.—
Accents from a well-known tongue
Thro' the portal reach her ear.

" Rise my love—the bar remove—
" Dost thou wake or dost thou sleep?
" Think'st thou of thy absent love?—
" Dost thou laugh or dost thou weep?"—
' WILLIAM! Thou?—From sorrow's power
' I have learn'd to weep, and wake.
' Whence in midnight's gloomy hour,
' Whence his course does WILLIAM take?'

" We can only ride by night.—
" From Bohemia's plains I come,
" Late, ah late I come, but dight
" To bear thee to my distant home."—
' WILLIAM! WILLIAM! hither haste.
' Thro' the hawthorn blows the wind,
' In my glowing arms embraced
' Rest, and warmth, my love shall find.'

" Thro' the hawthorn let the winds
" Keenly blow with breath severe,
" The Courser paws, the spur he finds,
" Ah! I must not linger here.
" Lightly on the sable steed
" Come, my love,—behind me spring.
" Many a mile o'erpast with speed,
" To our bride-bed shall thee bring."

' Many a mile o'er distant ground
' Ere our nuptial couch we reach?—
' The iron bells of midnight sound,
' Soon the midnight fiends will screech.'—

" See how clear the moon's full ray,
" Soon the dead's swift course is sped,
" Long, O long ere dawn of day
" We shall reach the bridal bed."

' Who shall tend thy nuptial bower
, Who thy nuptial couch shall spread ?"
" Silent, cold, and small, our bower,
" Form'd of planks our nuptial bed.
" Yet for me, for thee there's space—
" Lightly on the courser bound,
" Deck'd is now our bridal place,
" Guests expecting wait around."

Won by fond affection's charm
On the horse she lightly sprung,
Roud her love, her lilly arm
Close the love-sick virgin flung.
On they press their rapid flight
Swifter than the whirlwind's force,
Struck from flints a sparkling light
Marks the steed's unceasing course.

On the left, and on the right,
Heaths, and meads, and fallow'd grounds,
Seem receding from their sight;
How each bridge they pass resounds.
" Fears my Love?—The moon shines clear,
" Swift the course of death is sped.
" Does my Love the dead now fear?"—
' No, ah! no!—Why name the dead?'

Hark! The solemn dirge, and knell!
Croaking round the raven flies,—
Hear the death song!—hear the bell—
See a grave fresh opened lies.
See the sad funereal rite,
See the coffin and the bier,
Hear the shriek of wild affright,
Groans of lamentation hear!

" While sounds the dirge, while death-bells ring,
" The corpse interr'd at midnight see.—
" Home my blooming bride I bring,
" You our bridal guests must be.—

" Sexton come, come with thy choir,
" Songs of love before us sing;
" O'er the couch of fond desire
" Priest thy nuptial blessings fling."

Down the sable bier was laid,
Hush'd the knell, and hush'd the dirge.
All his voice at once obey'd.
All their flight behind him urge.
On the steed still speeds his flight,
Swifter than the whirlwind's force;
Struck from flints the flashing light
Distant marks his rapid course.

To the left, and to the right,
As they pass with lightning speed,
Mountains vanish from their sight,
Streams, and woods, and towns recede.
" Fears my love?—The moon shines clear.—
" Swift the course of death is sped,—
" Does my Love the dead now fear?"—
' Leave, ah leave at peace the dead.'

Wheels, and racks, and gibbets, see
By the pale moon's trembling glance;
Crowding sprites, with horrid glee,
Round the seats of terror dance:
"Come, ye goblins! hither come,
"Hither let your footsteps tread,
"Follow to our distant home,
"Dance around our bridal bed."

Soon they hear, and follow fast,
Loudly murmuring as they move,
Like the shrill autumnal blast
Whistling thro' the wither'd grove.
Far the steed now speeds his flight,
Swifter than the whirlwind's force,
Struck from flints the flashing light
Distant marks his rapid course.

Far, shewn by the moon's pale light,
Far the distant landscape flies.
Far, receding from their sight,
Fly the clouds, the stars, the skies.

" Fears my Love ?—The moon shines clear.—
" Swift the course of death is sped.
" Does my Love the dead now fear ?"—
" Leave ! O leave at rest, the dead.

" Crows the cock—dark courser hear—
" Soon the sand will now be run.
" Now I scent the morning air*,
" Sable steed thy toil is done ;—
" Now our labour is compleat ;
" Swift's the passage of the dead ;
" We have reach'd our destin'd seat,
" Open now the nuptial bed."

'Gainst an iron-grated door
Fierce with loosen'd rein he drives ;
The ponderous bars resist no more,
Even a touch their hinges rives.

* This, and the other imitation of Shakespear, in ſtanza the fifteenth, are literally translated from the original.

Over tombs with clattering sound
Now they urge their destin'd way;
Scatter'd grave-stones gleam around
In the wan moon's glimmering ray.

Turn, O instant turn, the eye,
See a ghastly wonder shewn!—
The horseman's flesh, like tinder dry,
Drops piecemeal from each naked bone.
From the skull now falls the hair,
Drear the death-like Phantom stands,
A skeleton expos'd and bare,
Scythe and hour-glass in his hands.

See the black steed wildly rear—
Sparkling streams of horrid light
From his snorting nostrils glare,
Down he sinks to endless night.—
On the breeze loud shrieks are borne,
Groan the graves with boding breath;
LENORE's heart by tortures torn,
Vibrates now 'tween life and death.

Hand and hand in fatal ring
By the pale moon's fading ray,
Demons round them dance, and sing,
Howling forth this dreadful lay.—
" Patient bear th' heart-rending blast,
" Wage not impious war with Heaven,
" Here on earth thy days are past.
" Mercy to thy soul be given !"

10 JA 67

ELLENORE,

A BALLAD

ORIGINALLY WRITTEN IN GERMAN

BY

G. A. BÜRGER.

Erblickt ich zukunft? Mit der Britannischen
Sah ich in Streitlauf Deutschlands Muse
Heiss zu den kronenden zielen fliegen.

Klopstock.

DUBLIN:

PRINTED FOR JOHN ARCHER.

1799.

BRITISH MUSEUM

ELLENORE.

AT break of day from frightful dreams
Upstarted Ellenore:
My William, art thou slayn, she sayde,
Or dost thou love no more?

He went abroade with Richard's host
The paynim foes to quell;
But he no word to her had writt,
An he were sick or well.

With blore of trump and thump of drum
His fellow-soldyers come,
Their helms bedeckt with oaken boughs,
They seeke their long'd-for home.

And evry road and evry lane
Was full of old and young
To gaze at the rejoycing band,
To haile with gladsom toung.

" Thank God!" their wives and children sayde,
" Welcome!" the brides did saye;
But greet or kiss gave Ellenore
To none upon that daye.

And when the soldyers all were bye,
She tore her raven hair,
And cast herself upon the growne,
In furious despair.

Her mother ran and lyfte her up,
And clasped in her arm,
" My child, my child, what dost thou ail?
God shield thy life from harm!"

' O mother, mother! William's gone
What's all besyde to me?
There is no mercie, sure, above!
All, all were spar'd but he!'

" Kneele downe, thy paternostor saye,
'Twill calm thy troubled spright:
The Lord is wise, the Lord is good;
What He hath done is right."

' O mother, mother! saye not so;
Most cruel is my fate:
I prayde, and prayde; but whatte avaylde?
'Tis now, alas! too late.'

" Our Heavenly Father, if we praye,
Will help a suffring child:
Go take thy holy sacrament;
So shal thy grief grow mild."

' O mother, what I feele within,
No sacrament can staye;
No sacrament can teche the dead
To bear the sight of daye.'

" May-be, among the heathen folk
Thy William false doth prove,
And put away his faith and troth,
And take another love.

Then wherefor sorrowe for his loss?
Thy moans are all in vain:
But when his soul and body parte,
His falsehode brings him pain."

‘ O mother, mother! gone is gone:
My hope is all forlorn;
The grave my only safeguard is—
O, had I ne’er been born!

Go out, go out, my lamp of life;
In grizely darkness die:
There is no mercie, sure, above!
For ever let me lie.’

“ Almighty God! O do not judge
My poor unhappy child;
She knows not what her lips pronounce,
Her anguish makes her wild.

My girl, forget thine earthly woe,
And think on God and bliss;
For so, at least, shal not thy soul
Its heavenly bridegroom miss.”

'O mother, mother! what is bliss,
And what the fiendis cell?
With him 'tis heaven any where,
Without my William, hell.

Go out, go out, my lamp of life,
In endless darkness die:
Without him I must loathe the earth,
Without him scorne the skie.'

And so despair did rave and rage
Athwarte her boiling veins;
Against the Providence of God
She hurlde her impious strains.

She bet her breast, and wrung her hands,
And rollde her tearless eye,
From rise of morn, til the pale stars
Again orespred the skye.

When harke! abroade she herde the tramp
Of nimble-hoofed steed;
She herde a knight with clank alighte,
And climbe the stair in speed.

And soon she herde a tinkling hand,
That twirled at the pin;
And thro her door, that opend not,
These words were breathed in.

"What ho! what ho! thy door undo;
Art watching or asleepe?
My love, dost yet remember me,
And dost thou laugh or weepe?"

"Ah! William here so late at night!
Oh! I have wachte and wak'd:
Whense art thou come? For thy return
My heart has sorely ak'd.'

"At midnight only we may ride;
I come ore land and see:
I mounted late, but soone I go;
Aryse, and come with mee."

"O William, enter first my bowre,
And give me one embrace:
The blasts athwarte the hawthorn hiss;
Awayte a little space.'

"Tho blasts athwarte the hawthorn hiss,
I may not harbour here;
My spurs are sett, my courser pawes,
My hour of flight is nere.

All as thou lyest upon thy couch,
Aryse, and mount behinde;
To-night we'le ride a thousand miles,
The bridal bed to finde."

‘ How, ride to night a thousand miles ?
Thy love thou dost bemock :
Eleven is the stroke that still
Rings on within the clock.’

“ Looke up ; the moon is bright, and we
Outstride the earthly men :
I’le take thee to the bridal bed,
And night shal end but then.”

‘ And where is then thy house, and home,
And bridal bed so meet ?’
“ Tis narrow, silent, chilly, low,
Six planks, one shrouding sheet.”

‘ And is there any room for me,
Wherein that I may creepe ?
“ There’s room enough for thee and me,
Wherein that we may sleepe.

All as thou lyest upon thy couch,
Aryse, no longer stop;
The wedding-guests thy coming wayte,
The chamber-door is ope."

All in her sarke, as there she lay,
Upon his horse she sprung;
And with her lily hands so pale
About her William clung.

And hurry-skurry off they go,
Unheeding wet or dry;
And horse and rider snort and blow,
And sparkling pebbles fly.

How swift the flood, the mead, the wood,
Aright, aleft, are gone!
The bridges thunder as they pass,
But earthly sowne is none.

Tramp, tramp, across the land they speede;
Splash, splash, across the see:
"Hurrah! the dead can ride apace;
Dost feare to ride with mee?

The moon is bright, and blue the night;
Dost quake the blast to stem?
Dost shudder, mayd, to seeke the dead?"
'No, no, but what of them?'

How glumly sownes yon dirgy song!
Night-ravens flappe the wing.
What knell doth slowly tolle ding-dong?
The psalms of death who sing?

Forth creepes a swarthy funeral train,
A corse is on the biere;
Like croke of todes from lonely moores,
The chauntings meete the eere.

" Go, beare her corse when midnight's past,
With song, and tear, and wail;
I've gott my wife, I take her home,
My hour of wedlock hail!

Leade forth, o clark, the chaunting quire,
To swelle our spousal-song:
Come, preest, and reade the blessing soone;
For bed, for bed we long."

The bier is gon, the dirges hush;
His bidding all obaye,
And headlong rush thro briar and bush,
Beside his speedy waye.

Halloo! halloo! how swift they go,
Unheeding wet or dry;
And horse and rider snort and blow,
And sparkling pebbles fly.

How swift the hill, how swift the dale,
Aright, aleft, are gon!
By hedge and tree, by thorp and town,
They gallop, gallop on.

Tramp, tramp, across the land they speede;
Splash, splash, across the see:
Hurrah! the dead can ride apace;
Dost feare to ride with mee?

Look up, look up, an airy crew
In roundel daunces reele:
The moon is bright, and blue the night,
Mayst dimly see them wheele.

Come to, come to, ye ghostly crew,
Come to, and follow me,
And daunce for us the wedding-daunce,
When we in bed shal be."

And brush, brush, brush, the ghostly crew
Come wheeling ore their heads,
All rustling like the witherd leaves
That wide the whirlwind spreads.

Halloo! halloo! away they go,
Unheeding wet or dry;
And horse and rider snort and blow,
And sparkling pebbles fly.

And all that in the moonshine lay,
Behind them fled afar;
And backward scudded overhead
The skie and every star.

Tramp, tramp, across the land they speede:
Splash, splash, across the see;
"Hurrah! the dead can ride apace;
Dost feare to ride with mee?

I weene the cock prepares to crowe;
The sand will soone be run:
I snuffe the early morning air;
Downe, downe! our work is done.

The dead, the dead can ride apace:
Our wed-bed here is fit:
Our race is ridde, our journey ore,
Our endless union knit."

And lo! an yron-grated gate
Soon biggens to their view:
He crackde his whyppe; the clanging bolts,
The doors asunder flew.

They passe, and 'twas on graves they trodde;
"'Tis hither we are bound:"
And many a tombstone ghastly white
Lay in the moonshyne round.

And when he from his steed alytte,
His armure, black as cinder,
Did moulder moulder all awaye,
As were it made of tinder.

His head became a naked skull;
Nor hair nor eyne had he:
His body grew a skeleton,
Whilome so blithe of ble.

And at his dry and boney heel
No spur was left to bee;
And in his witherd hand you might
The scythe and hour-glass see.

And lo! his steed did thin to smoke,
And charnel-fires outbreathe;
And pal'd, and bleachde, then vanishde quite
The mayd from underneathe.

And hollow howlings hung in air,
And shrekes from vaults arose:
Then knewe the mayd she mighte no more
Her living eyes unclose.

But onward to the judgment-seat,
Thro' mist and moonlight dreare,
The ghostly crew their flighte persewe,
And hollowe inn her eare:

"Be patient; tho thyne herte should breke,
Arrayne not Heaven's decree;
Thou nowe art of thy bodie reft,
Thy soul forgiven bee!"

10 JA 67

LENORE.

EIN

GEDICHT.

VON

GOTTFRIED AUGUST BÜRGER.

Haste, haste, he lies in wait, he's at the door,
Insidious *Death!* should his strong hand arrest,
No composition sets the prisoner free.
Eternity's inexorable chain
Fast binds; and vengeance claims the full arrear.

YOUNG.

Dublin:
PRINTED FOR JOHN ARCHER.
1799.

BRITISH MUSEUM

LENORE.

LENORE fuhr um's Morgenroth
Empor aus schweren Träumen:
" Bist untreu, Wilhelm, oder todt?
Wie lange whillst du säumen?"
Er war mit König Friedrich's Macht
Gezogen in die Prager Schlacht,
Und hatte nicht geschrieben:
Ob er gesund geblieben.

Der König und die Kaiserinn,
Des langen Haders müde,
Erweichten ihren harten Sinn,
Und machten endlich Friede;

Und jedes Heer, mit Sing und Sang,
Mit Paukenschlag und Kling und Klang,
Geschmückt mit grünen Reisern,
Zog heim zu seinen Häusern.

Und überall all überall,
Auf Wegen und auf Stegen,
Zog Alt und Jung dem Jubelschall
Der Kommenden entgegen.
Gottlob! rief Kind und Gattinn laut,
Willkommen! manche frohe Braut.
Ach! aber für Lenoren
War Gruss und Kuss verlohren.

Sie frug den zug wohl auf und ab,
Und frug nach allen Nahmen;
Doch keiner war, der Kundschaft gab,
Von allen, so da kamen.
Als nun das Heer vorüber war,
Zerraufte sie ihr Rabenhaar,
Und warf sich hin zur Erde,
Mit wüthiger Geberde.

Die Mutter lief wohl hin zu ihr:—
„ Ach, dass sich Gott erbarme!
Du trautes Kind, was ist mit dir?"—
Und schloss sie in die Arme.—
„ O Mutter, Mutter! hin ist hin!
Nun fahre Welt und alles hin!
Bey Gott ist kein Erbarmen.
O weh, O weh, mir Armen!"—

„ Hilf Gott, hilf! Sieh uns gnädig an!
Kind, bet' ein Vaterunser!
Was Gott thut, das ist wolgethan.
Gott, Gott erbarmt sich Unser!"—
„ O Mutter, Mutter! Eitler Wahn!
Gott hat an mir nicht wohlgethan!
Was half, was half mein Beten?
Nun ist's nicht mehr vonnöthen."—

„ Hilf Gott, hilf! wer den Vater kennt,
Der weiss, er hilft den Kindern.
Das hochgelobte Sakrament
Wird deinen Jammer lindern."—

„ O Mutter, Mutter! was mich brennt,
Das lindert mir kein Sakrament!
Kein Sakrament mag Leben
Den Todten wiedergeben."—

„ Hör, Kind! wie, wenn der falsche Mann,
Im fernen Ungerlande,
Sich seines Glaubens abgethan,
Zum neuen Ehebande?
Lass fahren, Kind, sein Herz dahin!
Er hat es nimmermehr Gewinn!
Wann Seel' und Leib sich trennen,
Wird ihn sein Meineid brennen."—

„ O Mutter, Mutter! hin ist hin!
Verlohren ist verlohren!
Der Tod, der Tod ist mein Gewinn!
O wär' ich nie gebohren!
Lisch aus, mein Licht, auf ewig aus!
Stirb hin, stirb hin in Nacht und Graus,
Bey Gott ist kein Erbarmen,
O weh, O weh, mir Armen!"—

„ Hilf Gott, hilf! Geh nicht ins Gericht
Mit deinem armen Kinde!
Sie wiess nicht, was die Zunge spricht.
Behalt ihr nicht die Sünde!
Ach, Kind, vergiss dein irdisch Leid,
Und denk an Gott und Seligkeit!
So wird doch deiner Seelen
Der Bräutigam nicht fehlen."—

„ O Mutter!—was ist Seligkeit?
O Mutter! Was ist Hölle?
Bey ihm, bey ihm ist Seligkeit,
Und ohne Wilhelm Hölle!—
Lisch aus, mein Licht, auf ewig aus!
Stirb hin, stirb hin in Nacht und Graus!
Ohn' ihn mag ich auf Erden,
Mag dort nicht selig werden."—

So wüthete, Verzweifelung
Ihr in Gehirn und Adern.
Sie fuhr mit Gottes Fürsehung
Vermessen fort zu hadern;

Zerschlug den Busen, und zerrang
Die Hand, bis Sonnenuntergang,
Bis auf am Himmelsbogen
Die goldnen Sterne zogen.

Und aussen, horch! ging's trap trap trap,
Als wie von Rosseshufen,
Und klirrend stieg ein Reiter ab,
An des Geländers Stufen;
Und horch! und horch! den Pfortenring
Ganz lose, leise, klinglingling!
Dann kamen durch die Pforte
Vernehmlich diese Worte.

„ Holla, Holla! Thu auf mein Kind!
Schläfst, Liebchen, oder wachst du?
Wie bist noch gegen mich gesinnt?
Und weinest oder lachst du?"—
„ Ach, Wilhelm, du?—So spät bey Nacht?—
Geweinet hab' ich und gewacht;
Ach, grosses Leid erlitten!
Wo kommst du hergeritten?"—

„ Wir satteln nur um Mitternacht.
Weit ritt ich her von Böhmen.
Ich habe spät mich aufgemacht,
Und will dich mit mir nehmen."—
„ Ach, Wilhelm, erst herein geschwind!
*Den Hagedorn, durchsaust der Wind,
Herein, in meinen Armen,
Herzliebster, zu erwarmen!"—

„ Lass sausen durch den Hagedorn,
Lass sausen, Kind, lass sausen!
Der Rappe scharrt; es klirrt der Sporn.
Ich darf allhier nicht hausen.
Komm, schürze, spring' und schwinge dich
Auf meinen Rappen hinter mich!
Muss heut noch hundert Meilen
Mit dir in's Brautbett' eilen.

* Through the sharp hawthorn blows the cold wind.
Shakespear's King Lear, Act iii. Scene 4.

„ Ach! wolltest hundert Meilen noch
Mich heut in's Brautbett' tragen?
Und horch! es brummt die Glocke noch,
Die elf schon angeschlagen."—
„ Sieh hin, sieh her! der Mond scheint hell.
Wir und die Todten reiten schnell.
Ich bringe dich, zur Wette,
Noch heut ins Hochzeitbette."—

„ Sag an, wo ist dein Kämmerlein?
Wo? Wie dein Hochzeitbettchen?"—
„ Weit, weit von hier!—Still, kuhl und klein!—
Sechs Bretter und zwey Brettchen!"—
„ Hat's Raum für mich?"—„ Für dich und mich!
Komm, schürze, spring' und schwinge dich!
Die Hochzeitgäste hoffen;
Die Kammer steht uns offen."—

Schön Liebchen schürzte, sprang und schwang
Sich auf das Ross behende;
Wohl um den trauten Reiter schlang
Sie ihre lilienhände;

Und hurre hurre, hop hop hop!
Ging's fort in sausendem Galopp,
Dass Ross und Reiter schnoben,
Und Kies und Funken stoben.

Zur rechten und zur linken Hand,
Vorbey vor ihren Blicken,
Wie flogen Anger, Haid' und Land!
Wie donnerten die Brücken!
„ Graut Liebchen auch? – Der Mond scheint hell!
Hurrah! die Todten reiten schnell!
Graut Liebchen auch vor Todten?"—
„ Ach nein! – Doch lass die Todten!"

Was klang dort für Gesang und Klang?
Was flatterten die Raben?
Horch Glockenklang! horch Todtensang:
„ Lasst uns den Leib begraben!"
Und näher zog ein Leichenzug,
Der Sarg und Todtenbaare trug.
Das Lied war zu vergleichen
Dem Unkenruf in Teichen.

„ Nach Mitternacht begrabt den Leib,
„ Mit Klang und Sang und Klage!
„ Jetzt führ' ich heim mein junges Weib.
„ Mit, mit zum Brautgelage!
„ Komm, Küster, hier! Komm mit dem Chor,
„ Und gurgle mir das Brautlied vor!
„ Komm, Pfaff', und sprich den Segen,
„ Eh wir zu Bett' uns legen!"—

Still Klang und Sang.—Die Baare schwand.—
Gehorsam seinem Rufen,
Kam's, hurre hurre! nachgerannt,
Hart hinter's Rappen Hufen.
Und immer weiter, hop hop hop!
Ging's fort in sausendem Galopp,
Dass Ross und Reiter schnoben,
Und Kies und Funken stoben.

Wie flogen rechts, wie flogen links,
Gebirge, Bäum' und Hecken!
Wie flogen links, und rechts, und links
Die Dörfer, Städt' und Flecken!—

„ Graut Liebchen auch?—Der Mond scheint hell!
Hurrah! die Todten reiten schnell!
Graut Liebchen auch vor Todten?"—
„ Ach! Lass sie ruhn die Todten."—

Sieh da! sieh da! Am Hochgericht
Tanzt' um des Rades Spindel
Halb sichtbarlich bey Mondenlicht,
Ein luftiges Gesindel.—
Sasa! Gesindel, hier! Komm hier!
Gesindel, komm und folge mir!
Tanz' uns den Hochzeitreigen,
Wann wir zu Bette steigen!"—

Und das Gesindel, husch, husch, husch!
Kam hinten nachgeprasselt;
Wie Wirbelwind am Haselbusch
Durch dürre Blätter rasselt.
Und weiter, weiter, hop hop hop!
Ging's fort in sausendem Galopp,
Dass Ross und Reiter schnoben
Und Kies und Funken stoben.

Wie flog, was rund der Mond beschien,
Wie flog es in die Ferne!
Wie flogen oben über hin
Der Himmel und die Sterne!—
Graut Liebchen auch?—Der Mond scheint hell!
Hurrah! die Todten reiten schnell!
„ Graut Liebchen auch vor Todten?"—
„ O weh! Lass ruhn die Todten!"—

„ Rapp'! Rapp! Mich dünkt der Hahn schon ruft.
Bald wird der Sand verrinnen—
Rapp'! Rapp'! Ich wittre Morgenluft—
Rapp' Tummle dich von hinnen!
Vollbracht, vollbracht ist unser Lauf!
Das Hochzeitbette thut sich auf!
Die Todten reiten schnelle!
Wir sind, wir sind zur Stelle."—

Rasch auf ein eisern Gitterthor
Ging's mit verhängtem Zügel;
Mit schwanker Gert' ein Schlag davor,
Zersprengte Schloss und Riegel.

Die Flügel flogen klirrend auf,
Und über Grüber ging der Lauf.
Es blinkten Leichensteine
Rund um im Mondenscheine.

Ha sieh! ha sieh! im Augenblick,
Huhu! ein grässlich Wunder!
Des Reiters Koller, Stück für Stück,
Fiel ab, wie muerber Zunder,
Zum Schädel, ohne Zopf und Schopf,
Zum nackten Schädel ward sein Kopf;
Sein Körper zum Gerippe,
Mit Stundenglas und Hippe.

Hoch bäumte sich, wild schnob der Rapp',
Und sprühte Feuerfunken;
Und hui! war's unter ihr hinab
Verschwunden und versunken.
Geheul! Geheul! aus hoher Luft,
Gewinsel kam aus tiefer Gruft.
Lenorens Herz, mit Beben,
Rang zwischen Tod und Leben.

Nun tanzten wohl bey Mondenglanz,
Rund um herum im Kreise,
Die Geister einen Kettentanz,
Und heulten diese Weise:
„Geduld! Geduld! Wenn's Herz auch bricht!
Mit Gott im Himmel hadre nicht!
Des Leibes bist du ledig;
Gott sey der Seele gnädig!"

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